

HOW TO INTERPRET THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Content Standards define what learners must know and be able to do. Performance Standards define how good is good enough to meet the content standards and answer the question: what students actually know and can do. Performance standards indicate the quality of student performance – is it excellent, acceptable, or something less? The level of performance is determined by the extent to which students demonstrate command over – in quality and quantity- the concepts and skills outlined in the content standards and indicators. Said another way, performance standards indicate how competent or adept a student demonstration must be to show attainment of the content standards.

Specifically, performance standards:

1. Specify particular skills and concepts that students must know and be able to do as defined by the content standards (often in greater detail with some additional explanation of the type, quality, range, and depth of the performance expectations).
2. Define several different levels of achievement that outline the extent to which students demonstrate command over the concepts and skills within the content standards. The Arizona Adult Education Standards Initiative has adopted 5 levels of proficiency: Beginning (a ways to go before passing); Approaching (getting close); Met (passing); Exceeds (excellent performance, beyond passing).
3. Establish the difficulty of the material with which students must work (e.g., vocabulary lists, spelling lists, reading lists or reading difficulty levels).

Students at one Adult Education proficiency level are able to display most of the knowledge, skills and processes at that level (e.g. Met level) and lower proficiency levels (e.g. Approaching and Beginning Levels). Once assessments are adopted, the proficiency levels and their descriptors are intended to inform and guide interpretation of the scores. They describe what students at a particular level generally know and can do. In other words, each proficiency level descriptor is a statement of the knowledge, skills, and abilities expected to be held by the average student who is associated with that level.

In an attempt to ensure consistency across the various disciplines, the Performance Standards Teams adopted the following terms:

Occasionally; seldom: (Beginning)	Able to demonstrate skills/command of the concepts up to 49% of the time.
Sometimes: (Approaching)	Able to demonstrate skills/command of the concepts 50% to 74% of the time.
Often; Most of the time: (Met)	Able to demonstrate skills/command of the concepts 75% to 89% of the time.
Consistently: (Exceeds)	Able to demonstrate skills/command of the concepts 90% to 100% of the time.